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AP Literature

Mr. Lane

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Barbie Girl

The difference between a girl and a doll is not just the physical characteristics but also the mechanics of everything a human being embodies: a heart, a brain, emotions such as love or hate, tendons, and the choices to make decisions for them. The classic, first-choice doll for young girls has always been Barbie - who has been around for just above fifty years. Barbie is not just a doll; dolls are pretty to look at but often empty headed girl. Barbie was an idol for little, adolescent girls. Now, because of the magnificent work of the creators of Barbie, females all around the world have a perfect, shapely, beautiful woman to compare themselves to. Within the title “Barbie Girl,” definitions of words contain hints and answers to the poem.

The title creates an image of a Barbie-like girl identifying the poem “Barbie Girl.” The image paints a picture of a young female who is stunningly beautiful, shaped perfectly from head to foot, with lavishly long, silky, blonde hair in the beginning. From the title, the expectation of the poem is swayed to assume that the poem will be told about the beautiful young child. However, the poems connotative meaning holds a deeper, darker purpose.

The poem represents an image of a normal teenage girl who has been treated as a typical female. As a child she received gifts, dolls, and cherry colored lipstick which predict that she is a girly girl who loves getting dressed up and looking beautiful, but when puberty hits, suddenly she is not a carefree, beautiful little girl anymore; she is now a “…fat nose on thick legs” (11). What happened? She is not an ugly girl, and she has normal teenage appearance, feelings, and brains. The girl

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takes up dieting and exercise, always self-conscious of her appearance and apologizes to everyone about her outer shell. Her patience thin, rubbed down by the teasing comments about her nose and legs day after day, worn down “like a fan belt” (16). Because of the girl’s pain and teasing every day, her life is a spinning wheel getting worn down. With spite, she kills herself, and lays peacefully, without the taunting comments and ugly appearances. At the funeral she is dressed up like a doll, “in a pink and white nightie:”(22) the perfect image. She is finally happy and pretty. The continuous teasing that the girl caused her final demise.

Connecting the poem to its title, the image of a Barbie is planted in one’s head and helps picture and compares the fat girl in the poem. The images women have to compare themselves to in today’s world are picturesque and airbrushed. The title is to show that the girl in the poem compares herself to a perfect image of something that was not her. Everyone is perfect in their own way; however, everyone in the world tries to be that perfect Barbie figure.

Work Cited

Piercy, Marge. “Barbie Girl.” *Perrine’s Literature.* Eds. Thomas R. Arp and Greg Johnson. Ninth ed.

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